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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the design, purpose, implementation, and outcomes of an October 1994 policy forum on the impact of the Goals 2000 program on students with disabilities. Conclusions and recommendations of the forum identified 31 critical activities grouped into six major strategies to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities in Goals 2000 initiatives. These strategies are: (1) define and implement accountability; (2) improve teaching and learning; (3) use Goals 2000 as the umbrella for reform; (4) build local trust, involvement, and commitment; (5) build leadership; and (6) offer unified, integrated technical assistance. In addition, 17 barriers were identified and grouped into the following key obstacles: a rigid, traditional special education paradigm; fear and mistrust among stakeholders; unresolved tension between excellence and equity; pervasive public distrust/discounting of public education; legacy of fragmented, additive reform efforts; complacency/caution about need for change; and disconnected, outdated personnel systems. The group also related identified issues to existing and future projects of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Appendices include a list of participants, the forum agenda, abstracts of participating OSEP-funded projects, and draft guidance for Goals 2000 comprehensive plan review. (DB)

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GOALS 2000: IMPACTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY FORUM REPORT

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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a policy forum convened by Project FORUM, a contract funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U. S. Department of Education and located at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Project FORUM carries out a variety of activities that provide information needed for program improvement, and promote the utilization of research data and other information for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The project also provides technical assistance and information on emerging issues, and convenes small work groups to gather expert input, obtain feedback, and develop conceptual frameworks related to critical topics in special education.

This document reports on the design, purpose, implementation and outcomes of a policy forum entitled Goals 2000: Impacting Students With Disabilities held at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Participants included representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSEP) funded projects, organization and associations, state and local education agencies, parents, Project FORUM and (OSEP).

The conclusions and recommendations of the forum included thirty one critical activities under six major strategies needed to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities in Goals 2000 initiatives. The six major categories are:

1. Define and Implement Accountability
2. Improve Teaching and Learning
3. Use Goals 2000 as the Umbrella for Reform
4. Build local Trust, Involvement and Commitment
5. Build Leadership
6. Offer Unified, Integrated Technical Assistance

A FORUM ON GOALS 2000: IMPACTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I. PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE POLICY FORUM

A. Background and Purpose of the Forum

In March, 1994, the education reform movement reached an important milestone with the passage of GOALS 2000: Educate America Act. GOALS 2000 focuses on high standards and expectations for all students, including those with disabilities. The GOALS 2000: Educate America Act provides states and communities with an opportunity to complement and extend their reform efforts with a coherent, flexible, grassroots-based education system. Many states are developing comprehensive plans based on their unique vision of education reform. It is critical that students with disabilities be included along with all other children in the planning and implementation of this educational change.

This forum was stimulated by discussions regarding the low levels of participation of students with disabilities within GOALS 2000 planning activities in the states. The recognition of existing gaps by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) such as the lack of materials about GOALS 2000 for parents of students with disabilities, sparked the decision to convene a policy forum to address the participation of students with disabilities in GOALS 2000 efforts at the federal, state, community and local levels. The intent of this forum was to identify gaps to be filled and to propose critical activities that need to take place over the next five years to ensure participation of all students, including those with disabilities in the planning and implementation of GOALS 2000 education reform efforts.

B. Preparation for the Meeting

Project FORUM staff worked with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) personnel to identify seventeen participants for the forum (Appendix A). Participants included representatives from the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Academy of Sciences, Council of Administrators of Special Education, the National Center on Educational Outcomes, State Education Agencies, Exceptional Children Assistive Center, Northeast Regional Resource Center, WESTAT Corporation, U.S. Department of Education, Center for Disability Policy

Research at the University of Maryland, Center for Special Education Finance, local education agencies (retired superintendent). In addition, several OSEP and Project FORUM staff participated in the forum. Marilyn Crocker served as forum facilitator.

Resource materials were provided to the forum participants as a part of the forum packets, including abstracts of the OSEP-funded projects that participated in the forum and *Crosswalking the National Agenda and GOALS 2000*. This document was prepared by Myrna Mandlawitz, Special Assistant for Government Relations and External Affairs, NASDSE and Tom O'Toole, past president, American Speech-Hearing Association (Appendix C).

C. Process of the Meeting

The forum on GOALS 2000: Impacting Students With Disabilities was held on October 27th and 28th, 1994 at the NASDSE headquarters in Alexandria, VA. The agenda (Appendix B) began with welcoming remarks by Martha Fields, Executive Director, NASDSE, and an orientation to the tasks of the Forum presented by Joy Hicks, Director, Project FORUM. Lou Danielson, Director, Division of Innovation and Development, OSEP, presented a brief overview of the impetus for the meeting. Participants introduced themselves and identified their roles and experience. OSEP-funded project directors briefly commented on connections between the workscope of their projects and GOALS 2000. Michael Feuer, National Academy of Sciences, briefly described their effort to examine the impact of GOALS 2000 on students with disabilities.

The first day of the forum proceeded with a presentation by Jim Button, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in which he addressed three areas: how the Department of Education has organized itself for the GOALS 2000 effort; the State application process; and the guidance provided by the Department to assist States in the formation of their plans. He provided participants with the following materials: "GOALS 2000 State Application & Grant Status Report" and a draft copy of *Guidance for GOALS 2000 Comprehensive Plan Review* (Appendix D). A brief period of questions from the participants and group discussion followed the presentation. Because this latter document is still in draft form, Jim encouraged review and comment by forum participants, indicating that the final document would be available in a few weeks.

Following introductions to the task for day one by Marilyn Crocker, facilitator, the rest of the morning was devoted to a full group workshop directed toward two tasks: developing a *Shared Vision* of American education by the Year 2000 if the GOALS 2000 law is fully implemented, and identifying *Key Obstacles* currently blocking the realization of such a vision. During the lunch break, Project FORUM staff used a notebook

computer to prepare a draft of the material generated in the morning workshop for each participant.

After a brief period of reflection on and refinement of the work of the morning, participants spent the afternoon session engaged in identifying *Critical Activities*, both long and short term, which must take place in the next five years in order to address the identified obstacles and ensure realization of the vision for GOALS 2000 impacting all children. Each participant was assigned to one of three small groups representing a range of perspectives, and each group was given the latitude to address the full range of obstacles in generating critical activities. Teams used large index cards to record each proposed critical activity and reported back in a full group plenary session. Participants organized the recommended critical actions into six action arenas according to similarity of intent and gave them titles.

Project FORUM staff used a notebook computer to prepare a working draft of the critical activities generated in the afternoon workshop, and organized the individual barriers generated in the morning workshop into clusters.

At the start of the second day, participants reviewed the *Key Obstacle* clusters and made minor revisions. Using the obstacles as a screen, they critiqued the critical actions for gaps, and made additions to arrive at a refined list of critical activities. Project directors then identified which critical activities were already being addressed by OSEP projects and which could be addressed more fully by an addition to or a change in existing OSEP-funded projects. Finally, the group identified what new efforts must be taken to meet remaining activities, who else needs to be involved and what next steps will facilitate the completion of critical activities.

At noon on day two, Project Forum and OSEP staff closed the meeting with a summary of future steps to be taken with the information produced at the meeting.

II. OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

Using a notebook computer, Project FORUM staff maintained a process account of the large group discussions occurring on the first and second day. The facilitator also kept a running account of participant input on a flip chart. These resources were used to prepare and revise working summaries for the participants to use throughout the meeting. They also provided the data for the revised summaries included within this document.

A. Summary of Shared Vision

During the morning session of the first day, the participants generated a list of 41 shared vision elements that were later organized based on the discussions of the group. The following is a list of these Shared Vision Elements grouped into six major vision components.

■ STUDENTS' EQUAL ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS

Individualized education for all students; e.g., services and programs tailored for individual needs, guided by outcomes.

All students really learning in their school environments (not just in the classroom) having the "same" opportunities.

A system of education that actually includes students in school buildings, rather than excluding them in the name of reform.

The opportunity to learn firmly in place to ensure students have a genuine opportunity to meet the standards.

Appropriate teaching and learning system-wide.

All students involved in school improvement activities.

Genuine access to general education curriculum for students with disabilities.

Schools that prepare kids for both continued learning and skilled employment.

Every school community having moved beyond a recitation of the mantra that all children can learn at higher levels, to a direct demonstration of this principle.

■ SCHOOL CULTURE WHICH PROMOTES RESPECT FOR AND BELIEF IN THE POTENTIAL OF EACH LEARNER

School environment that promotes/supports students as learners.

Interdisciplinary and multicultural approach to providing students what they need without regard to funds, titles or turf.

Schools where kids can transcend their local environment and understand themselves as a part of a larger, multicultural world community.

A school culture which accommodates openness to human differences, rather than trying to "fix it."

A widespread belief system that the potential for becoming a successful adult is in every child.

Equal value placed on different levels of a child's independence and productivity when he/she becomes an adult.

Respect for all people (adults and children).

■ **COMMITMENT TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE,
SPECIFIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY**

Universal consensus on standards for what kids should know/learn, based on age and developmentally-appropriate practice.

Clarification of outcomes; e.g., what we really are trying to do and ways to assess all students.

System with educational accountability for all students; e.g., all students kept track of relative to outcomes.

Clear indicators of educational and social progress established and used for individual schools and children.

School personnel so prepared that all assessment and accountability occurs at the building level.

Arrival at a point where education is the issue, not reform.

More efficient overall schooling system with a greater percentage of education dollars going to learning activities directly tied to kids.

Fiscal policies specifically designed to support a clear program vision.

■ **INTEGRATED, UNIFIED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION**

Unified system of education in which all students are served and in which there is collaboration among all professionals and shared responsibility.

Unified system in which student achievement is equally valued across classrooms, schools, systems and states.

System aligned so that schools are able to provide supports, services and resources to students and teachers.

Consistent, stable, educational reform process that integratively involves services to all kids, with a focus on the whole child.

Local schools engaged in systemic restructuring in which there are integrated services, clear outcomes and systems of accountability.

An integrated social policy for all children, rather than fragmentation and an additive approach.

■ **EFFECTIVE, COMPETENT EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS**

Well-prepared, trained, relaxed workforce available to all students.

All teachers competent in both content and individualization of instruction.

Environment in which teachers have the opportunity to learn as professionals, rather than as "skilled workers".

■ **AUTHENTIC, COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Greater involvement of parents and the home culture in the development of expectations, outcomes and implementation.

School staff supported with collaboration, including team efforts involving parents on ongoing basis.

All adults, both school professionals and community members, feel responsible for all kids, rather than differentiating between "mine" and "yours."

Parents recognized by the educational community as co-equal partners.

Schools functioning as part of interagency/inter-community teams collaborating at all levels.

Broader fiscal/popular support for programs for children that include health and social services.

Considerable local school autonomy for schools that are succeeding, with the involvement of parents, local organizations and businesses.

B. Obstacles to Implementation of Shared Vision

Following identification of shared vision elements, key obstacles to implementing this shared vision were identified. A list of 17 barriers was identified. Grouping of the barrier elements into seven *Key Obstacles* occurred overnight and was refined and approved by the participants the second day. The listing of steps within the cluster titles for the seven *Key Obstacles* groupings appears below.

■ **RIGID, TRADITIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PARADIGM**

Perception of special education community that high standards equal an academic diploma.

Special education paradigm has been top-down and rules-driven. This is different from the flexible, bottoms-up GOALS 2000 approach.

■ **FEAR & MISTRUST AMONG STAKEHOLDERS**

Unwillingness/silence on part of the people to embrace non-academic outcomes, based in part on fear of some segments, such as the conservative right, who do not believe this is the function of the school and don't want tolerance for others as part of curriculum.

Fear that a lowering of standards will result in a slippery slope.

Mistrust on the part of the special education community that rhetoric of GOALS 2000 will be fostered but little change will occur in the way states and localities address the needs of students with disabilities.

Mistrust among stakeholders.

■ **UNRESOLVED TENSION BETWEEN EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY**

Ambiguity about what the scope of individualized instruction is; e.g., academics or more.

Tension between GOALS 2000 excellence, equity, high content standards and opportunity to learn.

Issues relative to diversity, equity and elitism exist resulting in disagreement, unclarity and a win/lose situation.

Lack of clear and accepted standards of success for schools and children.

■ **PERVASIVE PUBLIC DISTRUST/DISCOUNTING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

General public disdain, disregard and distrust for public education/schooling/teachers; this includes educators themselves.

■ **LEGACY OF FRAGMENTED, ADDITIVE REFORM EFFORTS**

Fiscal policies that contradict program goals.

Additive mode in all dimensions of educational planning and implementation.

Fragmented, excessive and simultaneous reform efforts.

■ **COMPLACENCY/CAUTION ABOUT NEED FOR CHANGE**

A belief that what we know is what we will know; as well as a failure to believe we can do better in areas such as technology.

■ **DISCONNECTED, OUTDATED PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

Broken personnel preparation system; preservice/inservice is out of step with practice needs.

Absence of consensus regarding personnel preparation.

During the afternoon of the first day, the three breakout groups used the draft lists of the vision elements and the obstacles to guide the development of critical activities. A total of 31 critical activities were generated. These critical activities were then organized during a plenary session into six clusters that constitute master strategies. The 31 critical activities generated within these six clusters are listed below.

C. CRITICAL ACTIVITIES LISTED BY MASTER STRATEGY

**Strategy 1. DEFINE AND IMPLEMENT EDUCATIONAL
ACCOUNTABILITY**

Critical Activities:

- Develop a method for accounting for financial resources.
- Develop a method for accounting for student outcomes.
- Evaluate ongoing system of educational accountability.
- Study/examine governance structures to assess the proper role of various governance entities within the decentralized system of Goal 2000.

Strategy 2. IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**Critical Activities:**

- Improve the range of instructional practices employed to each a diverse population of students (via an effective comprehensive system of personnel development, CSPD).
- Coordinate curriculum efforts by integrating separate curriculum standards, relating curriculum efforts to textbooks and aligning assessments with curriculum and textbooks.
- Create user-friendly schools staffed by caring, competent people ready to work with all kids.
- Reconceptualize personnel function to understand it as a human resource development system.
- Connect the process of staff development to research.
- Cross reference state/federal legislation and regulations to GOALS 2000.

Strategy 3: USE GOALS 2000 AS THE UMBRELLA FOR REFORM**Critical Activities:**

- Coordinate GOALS 2000 with other reform efforts such as IDEA, School to Work, the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), etc.
- Establish community resource councils in geo-political areas to provide the integration of agencies, schools, communities and employers at the local,

regional and state levels, and to coordinate activities of GOALS 2000 with STWOA, SCANS, JPTA, Welfare, Employment & Training and Economic Development.

Strategy 4. BUILD LOCAL TRUST, INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT

Critical Activities:

- Involve the entire community (the whole village) from the initial step of plan development.
- Provide participative channels which guarantee that local input will be more than simply "physical presence".
- Bring in new components of the community and agency and not just the "same old folks each time".
- Forge new partnerships among students, parents, teachers and community members in order to connect people with the information they want and need, build mutual respect among people with diverse perspectives and learn from each other.
- Use models and pilots to show people where students are doing well; e.g., where stakeholders are involved, where community building has occurred, and where there is accountability.
- Intentionally collect data that documents that students with disabilities are succeeding and disseminate this evidence/information.
- Locate and publicize "lighthouse examples" of success, especially those representative of and accessible to urban and less-endowed schools.
- Empower local, community-driven reform.

Strategy 5. BUILD LEADERSHIP

Critical Activities:

- Establish linkages to ensure that students with disabilities are represented in GOALS 2000 technical assistance efforts.

- Aggressively promote special education interest in all planning and action efforts related to GOALS 2000.
- Provide federal leadership to clarify the expectations (absolutes) for state plans and develop "consequences" if panels do not represent the community, or if state funding process does not include diversity
- Educate community/advocacy groups about their role in the process.
- Get out the word about the "big picture" to everyone at the local, state and federal levels through a variety of awareness-building and marketing efforts which strengthen the knowledge base.
- Model inclusive collaborative partnerships at all levels.

STRATEGY 6. OFFER UNIFIED, INTEGRATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Critical Activities:

- Form a non-governmental consortium to articulate an integrative framework model.
- Create an education/technical support system that provides specific information on Goals 2000 to federal, state and local stakeholders, delineating what Goals 2000 is and how it applies to the variety of constituencies. For example, expand the mission of the Office of Educational Research (OERI)- funded centers and link them with the RRCs.
- Give local school communities knowledge on school reform/restructuring.
- Reconceptualize technical assistance as a more integrative strategy.
- Engage in research and development efforts which are responsive to bottoms-up change, and to fill the current gaps.

As can be seen by the above listing, the largest number of activities were grouped in the cluster concerned with cultivating local trust, involvement and commitment. The large group discussion during Day 2 resulted in refinement, clarification and expansion of the critical activities. During the discussion, participants recognized the importance of all strategy clusters, but wished to go on record that emphasis for future attention should be given to the first three clusters listed, with a priority on the cluster calling for improved teaching and learning.

D. Determination of Current and Needed Activities

On the morning of the second day, participants reflected on the list of critical activities and on a project-by-project basis, comment on what is now being to done to meet the needs identified in the critical activities clusters and what additional activities/projects are needed. Spokespersons highlighted project abstracts (Appendix F) which had been included in the participant packet, and briefly elaborated on current efforts, future plans and additional efforts needed. The list that follows summarizes this feedback by forum participants.

1. OSEP has developed a directory of all projects which is available to anyone who would like it as a resource of how new relationships and connections might be made.
2. OSEP is involved in hundreds of projects which are directed at improving teaching and learning.
3. A mandated National Academy of Sciences study is underway to examine the extent to which children with disabilities are included within GOALS 2000. This study is a two-year activity which will soon convene a panel of distinguished scientists to review data collected through conducting site visits, calls and testimonials. Efforts should be made to intensify and expand these efforts.
4. The Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC) is working with states on their outcome accountability systems, especially coordinating research with the state education agencies (SEAs).
5. State panels are using Regional Resource Center (RRC) staff as consultants on their focus teams that deal with topics such as community/family partnerships and assessment.
6. The NERRC is also collaborating in depth with local communities and linking with other technical assistance providers, such as the Northeast Regional Educational Lab and the Technical Assistance for Parent Projects (TAPP) to apply the best knowledge in the field to local reform efforts. An example is Burlington's "Success by Six" effort.
7. The Center for Special Education Finance is carrying out four activities related to GOALS 2000:
 - a. Cost analysis - Work has begun with three states (Ky, Ore, and MA) to study fiscal issues.

- b. Integration of funds - Effort is underway to look for good models of how people are doing blended funding so that accounting and legal requirements are met at the same time that accounting models/procedures serve the vision of a unified school system.
 - c. Fiscal policy - Review and evaluation is in progress of various state models for reformed funding formulas which complement program objectives, rather than compete with them.
 - d. Costs and effects - In Oregon, work is underway to study the costs and benefits of inclusion in order to meet the call for accountability.
- 8. Progress is being made to establish a Parent Training and Information Project (PTI) in every state to meet the training and information needs of parents.
 - 9. PTIs designated as FOCUS centers are contributing insights on topics such as inclusion.
 - 10. The Center for Disability Policy Research, funded by OSEP, is an effort to enable collaboration among research entities of general and special education. This effort will work to form an umbrella for other efforts related to GOALS 2000. The Center hopes to model greater collaboration and cohesion at the federal level.
 - 11. The Consortium project is working in 48 states, taking lessons learned about inclusive reformed environments at the local school level and feeding them back to state policy makers; working with states on reform legislation as well as GOALS 2000 plans; creating cross-walks between the plan and integrated systems.
 - 12. The systemic school reform grant supporting the Baltimore City restructuring project is resulting in improved teaching and learning using state of the art practice. From this, new things are being learned about effective collaboration. In addition, new methods are being developed regarding new methods for how to look for outcome data.
 - 13. The Maryland State Agency / Federal Evaluation Studies (SAFES) program is working on developing an accountability and assessment program for students with significant cognitive disabilities. This program has supported the identification of an alternative set of assessments and some pilot performance assessments which will be a key piece of overall portfolios for students with disabilities.

14. WESTAT is assisting OSEP and states with activities related to information collection and reporting, including data on outcomes. Work involves providing technical assistance to states on the use and implications of data; offering an annual meeting for data managers (which, in part, seeks to get people involved in outcomes for students with disabilities); and improving data collection systems.
15. The work of the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) which is related to critical activities is documented in the project abstract.
16. Project FORUM provides for timely information exchange between OSEP and the states, identifies critical issues and provides information on changing topics with a very short time frame. FORUM provides a number of research syntheses, policy analyses, and policy forums. It maintains a state policy data base (currently containing data on 33 states).
17. NASDSE works across projects, serving as a subcontractor for a number of projects. These various linkages provide important services to SEAs.
18. The state support teams connects parents, political heavy hitters, local boards of education, and representatives of community organizations.

What additional projects are needed?

1. OSEP is sponsoring multiple assessment awards (\$150,000 per year) for the coming year. These projects could deal with technical issues that are related to the inclusion of students with disabilities such as the impact of accommodations.
2. A new outcome center award is another OSEP priority for the coming year. The center will support the implementation of GOALS 2000, generating information and focusing on problems and issues. This will be an important link with people who see themselves providing technical assistance activities. It is not intended as a technical assistance project.
3. We need a way to make research information, for example in the area of special education finance, useful in a policy context. Someone is needed to facilitate greater collaboration among the various research and practice efforts already being implemented, and to define how the outcome center relates.
4. We need to deal with barriers to collaboration across OSEP-funded projects. Perhaps NASDSE can bring in some state and local directors of special education and meet with all the OSEP supported projects to attune their work to be responsive to what the states need. OSEP-funded projects should also work more

closely with RRCs to enable them to meet the technical assistance needs of the states.

5. The PTIs provide a valuable network of parents and should be involved in GOALS 2000 work at the state, community and local level. We need to invite the parents to participate. PTIs are committed to system change and to involving parents in underrepresented communities. They can do a lot to help the modeling of truly inclusive efforts. Informed parent spokespersons lend credibility to the GOALS 2000 efforts.
6. We need to invest in training families and developing materials for them in family-friendly language. For example, a glossary of jargon would be useful.
7. The connection between the PTI and the university needs to be developed to involve parents in teaching and learning efforts.
8. We need to find new ways to infuse special education issues in general education research.
9. The Center for Disability Policy Research needs to look at:

How do we link with RRCs, research centers and systems change grants?

How do we get research out to policy makers so that it gets used?

How do we move policy discussions to the first three strategy areas identified in our work here as priority arenas for action?
10. The Center for Disability Policy Research will soon select four local education agencies that truly exemplify innovative districts and study the facilitators and the barriers.
11. There is great need for coordination among related projects, for example, the new early childhood institute.
12. The Maryland SAFES project is looking at the use of electronic portfolios for students with significant cognitive disabilities
13. The Annual Report to Congress should be redirected to become more outcomes oriented.
14. Project FORUM can be involved with any of the key areas identified in the critical activities in its three types of activities: syntheses, analysis and forums.

15. The state support teams are planning information packets in user- friendly language, practitioner panels and regional meetings.

In the process of the final forum discussion, participants made two general observations about the final list of critical activities:

- 1) that the recommendations were equally relevant to a discussion of concerns for the implementation of GOALS 2000 for general education; and
- 2) that the recommendations were broader in scope than originally envisioned.

Participants were asked to provide specific suggestions for activities.

III SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Forum participants generated 41 shared vision elements within six Major Vision Components. In addition, 17 barriers were identified and grouped into seven Key Obstacles groupings.

Thirty one (31) critical activities were grouped within six clusters. The group then reflected on the critical issues in relation to OSEP's existing projects and additional projects that may be needed in the future to address the critical activities.

Finally, forum participants identified several next steps:

1. Form a steering group to ensure that the work of this FORUM be furthered in a collaborative way, possibly by a series of sub-groups which deal with separate issues. As a part of this activity, think through who else needs to be involved at what points.
2. Link technical assistance providers with model development and policy projects.
3. Request from the U.S. Department of Education a clarification of "absolutes" and "consequences."
4. Share the results of this meeting with the GOALS 2000 state support teams.
5. Conduct crosswalking among all the initiatives, not only with the U.S. Department of Education, but at the state and local level. Do this through other parts of the federal government, such as those offices that administer the JTPA, the Perkins Act, and other laws which have elements related to students with disabilities. Crosswalking can be done for different audiences.
6. Create linkages among all efforts and GOALS 2000.

APPENDIX A: Participant List

**PARTICIPANTS LIST
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PROJECT FORUM
Joy Hicks
Eileen Ahearn
Joy Markowitz
Judy Schrag

APPENDIX B: Forum Agenda

AGENDA

FORUM ON GOALS 2000: IMPACTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

OCTOBER 27-28, 1994

Focus Question for the Forum: How do we ensure that state and local improvement efforts in support of Goals 2000 benefit all children including those with disabilities?

Thursday, October 27, 1994

6:30 - 9:00 Cook-to-order breakfast available at Embassy Suites for hotel guests
only

8:00 - 9:00 Continental breakfast available at NASDSE

9:00 - 9:30 Welcome
Joy Hicks - Director, Project FORUM
Martha Fields - Executive Director, NASDSE

Opening Remarks
Lou Danielson - Director, Division of Innovation and Development

Participant Introductions

9:30 - 10:00 Orientation to Goals 2000: Educate America Act
James Button, Office of Administrative Services

10:00 - 10:15 BREAK

10:15 - 11:00 Development of a Shared Vision: What would you hope to see in
place in American education by the Year 2000 if the Goals
2000 law is fully implemented?
Marilyn Crocker, Facilitator

11:00 - 12:00 Identification of the Key Obstacles: What are the barriers to
realizing this vision of education?
Marilyn Crocker

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

- 1:00 - 2:30 Small Group Activity: What are the critical activities, both long and short term, that must take place in the next five years to address the identified obstacles and ensure that Goals 2000 benefits all children?
- 2:30 - 2:45 BREAK
- 2:45 - 3:45 Large Group Discussion: Reports from the small group sessions and the development of a working consensus on a list of critical activities
- 3:45 - 4:00 Framing the task for tomorrow
Marilyn Crocker
- Note:* We will get together for an informal dinner at 6:30 pm for those participants who would like to join us.

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Friday, October 28, 1994

- 8:30 - 8:45 Opening and review of yesterday's work.
Joy Hicks
Marilyn Crocker
- 8:45 - 10:00 Large Group Discussion: Which of the identified critical activities are already being addressed by OSEP projects?
Marilyn Crocker
- 10:00 - 10:30 BREAK and Hotel Checkout
- 10:30 - 11:00 Continuation of Group Discussion: Which of the identified critical needs could be satisfied by an addition to or a change in existing OSEP projects?
- 11:00 - 11:45 Continuation of Group Discussion: What new projects must be designed and supported to address the remaining identified needs that cannot be met through existing projects? What other people/organizations/groups need to be involved in moving this agenda ahead? How can we facilitate this?
- 11:45 - 12:00 Delineation of next steps and closing.
Lou Danielson
Joy Hicks

**APPENDIX C: Abstracts of
Participating OSEP Funded Projects**

THE CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION FINANCE (CSEF)

During the past two decades, what was previously a patchwork of programs across the states has evolved into a truly national system of special education programs and services, which now serves almost five million students under the auspices of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). National expenditures on special education programs have risen dramatically as programs and related services for students with disabilities have become a major component of the nation's overall educational enterprise. As a result, policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels require cost and fiscal policy information to make informed decisions regarding the provision of special education services to children with disabilities.

To meet this need, the Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF) has been established at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Palo Alto, CA, under a five-year cooperative agreement with the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The Center's mission is to address a comprehensive set of fiscal issues related to the delivery and support of special education services to children throughout the U.S., and to provide opportunities for information sharing regarding complex and critical fiscal policy issues. Major activities of CSEF include compiling special education expenditure statistics, conducting special education finance policy studies, aggregating information on state special education finance systems, and disseminating and exchanging timely information in a broad range of formats for wide and diverse audiences.

The CSEF is co-directed by Jay G. Chambers, Ph.D. and Thomas B. Parrish, Ed.D., both leading authorities on the development of educational cost models and resource cost adjustments. They are supported by an outstanding team of research and support staff at AIR; nationally recognized experts in special education school finance, policy, and programs; and key professional organizations. If you are interested in being included in the Center's dissemination efforts, or would like information about the CSEF, contact:

Dr. Jay Chambers/Dr. Thomas Parrish
Center for Special Education Finance
American Institutes for Research
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P.O. Box 1113
Palo Alto, CA 94302
Phone: 415/493-3550 FAX: 415/858-0958

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN DATA ANALYSIS, EVALUATION, AND REPORT PREPARATION

**For the Division of Innovation and Development
Office of Special Education Programs
Project Officer: Dr. Scott Brown**

**Contractor: Westat, Inc.
Project Director: Dr. Marsha Brauen**

This five year contract provides technical assistance services to the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and to States. The purposes of the contract are:

- Assist OSEP in developing the capacity to collect and analyze valid, reliable, and comparable data for reporting, program planning, and evaluation;
- Conduct studies to analyze significant and emerging issues in special education;
- Assist OSEP in providing guidance to State and local educators regarding educational reform issues;
- Assist States to build the capacity to collect valid and reliable data and to perform evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of services provided under IDEA;
- Facilitate information exchanges among Federal, State, and local special educators to discuss common concerns and goals; and
- Obtain, organize, and analyze information from multiple sources for reporting on the status of IDEA implementation and the impact and effectiveness of IDEA implementation.

Four key features of the contract are stakeholder involvement, information dissemination, technical assistance, and liaison functions.

Westat writes and prepares the Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of IDEA and maintains OSEP's database on the annual State-reported data. Of particular importance is technical assistance to States including designing and coordinating annual meetings of State special education data managers to discuss data issues; convening work groups on revising and/or implementing the IDEA data reporting requirements; preparing technical assistance materials; and providing improved means of data collection and reporting. Westat also provides small grants States can use to fund analysis of their State-reported data and improve their data collection and reporting systems. States receive support from Westat for all aspects of their evaluations funded under the State Agency/Federal Evaluation Studies (SAFES) program, including assistance with study design, instruments, analysis, and report writing.

For more information call Dr. Marsha Brauen at 301-738-3668.



Northeast Regional Resource Center

Abstract

For twelve years the Northeast Regional Resource Center has assisted states, local education agencies and communities providing special education, related services, and early interventions to infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. The commitment of NERRC staff, their combined expertise, and their flexibility and responsiveness to both OSEP's priorities and the needs of state education agencies has resulted in exemplary products and services. The value of NERRC's leadership and support in the provision of technical assistance, consultation and training to SEAs, LEAs and affiliated agencies is corroborated by ongoing participation, collaboration and support from consumers. Excerpts from formal client endorsements further indicate the impact of NERRC's services: "responsive; leadership; highest caliber; outstanding; inspiration; critical asset; instrumental; significant benefits; superb;...".

The Northeast Regional Resource Center is a program of the Institute for Program Development at Trinity College of Vermont. As one of six cooperating centers and a federal center in a national network, NERRC's activities are authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The proposed programs and services of NERRC coincide with the six services of RRCs as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. 305.10), absolute priority: assist State educational agencies to more effectively provide special education; assist in identifying and solving persistent problems in providing quality special education; assist in developing, identifying, and replicating successful programs; gather and disseminate information among State agencies and other RRCs; assist in the improvement of information dissemination to professionals and parents; and provide information and training regarding applications under this and other parts of IDEA. Invitational priorities, the National Education Goals, current trends and issues, recruitment and retention, and improving outcomes are also addressed throughout NERRC's spectrum of services.

NERRC's agenda for the delivery of technical assistance within that spectrum focuses on eight primary areas: prevention, transition, family and community focus, outcomes and accountability, funding flexibility and regulatory issues, personnel, regular education, and information and technology. This agenda, at the heart of the management plan, drives NERRC's three primary functions: planning, capacity-building and collaboration. As outlined in the regulations, these functions occur internally (within the Center), regionally (within the eight Northeast states), and nationally (across the six regions). The project design, plan of operation, and combined experience of key personnel allow optimum efficiency and effectiveness in addressing current and emerging issues and trends in education, special education and related fields.

3.31.93

CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION REFORM

ABSTRACT

The American education system is currently undergoing reform at all levels. Changes are steadily being made in funding, governance structures, curriculum standards, staff development, assessment, and student support services. As part of these reform efforts, policymakers are looking anew at special education and its role in the overall education system. The "inclusion" movement, for example, is one response to the perceived shortcomings of the current system, though the impact on schools of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms hasn't been studied carefully. Education policymakers are searching for and demanding guidance on these issues in terms they can understand. The research base necessary for enlightened decision making is sparse, and examples of successful policies are not widely known. Policy analysts from both general and special education need to work in concert to learn more about the impact of reform on all students.

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), the Institute for the Study of Exceptional Children and Youth at the University of Maryland (UM), and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) propose to establish a Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform (the Center) to investigate and analyze critical issues in current general and special education policies, their interactions, and their impact on students with disabilities, with a focus on discerning policy options for stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels. Housed and managed at NASBE, the Center will be a joint research endeavor that capitalizes on the experience, professional background, and extensive knowledge and research base within each of the three organizations. Coordination and collaboration will be explored with other relevant policy research centers and organizations.

Over a three-year period, the Center will conduct extensive cross-site analysis across diverse state and local sites and across dimensions of policy development, implementation and impact. The Center will use primarily qualitative research methodologies, including systematic policy review, case study design and action research. The Center will report on:

- 1) the interaction of special and general education reform efforts within sixteen states (primary responsibility of CPRE);
- 2) four in-depth case studies of how state-level special and general education reform policies interact with and impact on local school districts and on students with disabilities (primary responsibility of NASBE); and
- 3) four additional in-depth case studies of school districts engaging in reform of both general and special education, such as those creating "inclusive" schools, including their interactions with state-level educational policies (primary responsibility of UM).

The proposed Center will also provide a structured program of training and mentoring to at least four graduate students each year who are in the fields of public policy and/or disability policy. They will be offered formal coursework and will participate as field researchers under the direction of senior researchers.

The Center's research findings will be disseminated through channels and vehicles that are readily accessed by a variety of stakeholders in language that is jargon free and appeals to a wide audience.

NCEO Overview

National Center on Educational Outcomes
James E. Ysseldyke, Director Martha L. Thurlow, Asst Director

College of Education • University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-626-1530 ** 350 Elliott Hall 75 East River Road Minneapolis, MN 55455 ** Fax: 612-624-0879

NCEO Mission: To work with federal and state agencies to facilitate and enrich the development and use of indicators of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Responsible use of such indicators will enable those students to achieve better results from their educational experiences.

NCEO Activities:

- Development of a conceptual model of outcomes and indicators
- Description and analysis of state practices in assessment of educational outcomes
- Analysis of existing national and state data bases
- Involvement in and reaction to standards-setting activities
- Description of international outcomes and standards activities

Activity Area and Status of Efforts	Applications
<u>Model Development</u> 1. Agreement on conceptual model of outcomes and indicators for general and special education 2. Agreement on outcomes and indicators at age 3 and 6, school completion, and post-school. 3. Identification of sources of data at the school completion level 4. Investigation of feasibility of collecting school completion data from states 5. Development of procedures for states and local education agencies to develop their own conceptual models (self-study guide)	• Use of model to match to state identified outcomes and indicators in Kentucky and Delaware • Use of model to guide transition planning for students with disabilities in New Jersey • Use of model to guide the restructuring of individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities in Iowa • Use of the model and consensus-building process to guide the evaluation of outcomes in Washington DC Public Schools • Use of self-study guide to direct outcomes identification efforts in Iowa, New Jersey, and Washington, DC
<u>Analysis of State Practice</u> 1. Annual surveys of states conducted since 1991 2. Indepth case studies conducted in Arizona, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Utah 3. Reports on lack of information on the participation of students with disabilities in state data collection programs 4. Seminar on alternative accountability practices, barriers to their use, and ways to overcome the barriers	• More states are documenting the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments • Trend toward greater inclusion of students with disabilities in statewide assessments • Trend toward greater use of accommodations during assessments of students with disabilities • Set of recommendations about alternative accountability practices

Project FORUM at NASDSE

ABSTRACT

The passage of P.L. 94-142 in November 1975, and subsequent amendments in the years since, has resulted in significant changes in the ways educational agencies at all levels address the needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Current interest in the overall reform of our nation's school systems promises to dramatically alter the roles, responsibilities, procedures, and educational practices of Federal, State, and local agencies. As the leadership of State and local educational agencies take steps to improve their education delivery systems, they will be seeking current and valid information to help make sound policy and implementation decisions.

In 1990, Congress amended Section 618 of the IDEA to require the development and implementation of a process "for the on-going identification of national program information needed for improving the management, administration, delivery, and effectiveness of programs and services provided under this Act," and require that OSEP organize, synthesize, interpret, and integrate information in order to promote its use for program improvement.

The tasks of RFP-92-059 support OSEP's efforts to meet its responsibilities under Section 618 for the next five years. To carry out these tasks, NASDSE proposes the establishment of the State/Federal Forum for Program Improvement (Project FORUM). Project FORUM will accomplish the following:

- Assist OSEP in developing and implementing a plan for the identification of State and local educational agency information needs for program improvement.
- Assist OSEP in developing and implementing a plan that will organize, synthesize, interpret, and integrate information for program improvement.
- Facilitate the ongoing communication of program and policy information between OSEP and State and local education agencies.
- Assist OSEP and State and local administrators by conducting analyses of critical and emerging issues that can be utilized to support policy and implementation decisions.
- Promote and facilitate the use of information for program improvement at all levels.

The activities proposed will be characterized by 1) involving State and local educational agencies, 2) gathering, organizing, and disseminating information, 3) collaborating with related agencies and projects, and 4) review of materials by a broad base of stakeholders.

COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

Goals 2000 and the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities Board on Testing and Assessment

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Board on Testing and Assessment proposes to establish a committee to study the impacts of *Goals 2000* education reforms on children with disabilities. The study (mandated under Section 1015 of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*) will evaluate the effects on children with various types and severity of disability of standards, instructional improvements, and assessments. Among the topics to be covered are: the implications of the National Educational Goals for children with disabilities; the adequacy of assessments and other measures for gauging progress toward meeting the goals and complying with standards; the need for—and costs of developing—special methods of instruction and assessment and special accommodations for children with disabilities; incentives and assistance that might be provided to states to develop new approaches to classroom instruction that are well-suited to children with diverse learning needs; the relationship between *Goals 2000* and other federal laws and regulations governing or affecting the education of children with disabilities; and the potential role of computers and/or other technologies in education and assessment of children with disabilities.

ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND

The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* represents a new approach to education reform that begins with the assumption that all children can learn to high standards. A significant feature of the law is its commitment to including students with disabilities in standards, instruction, and assessments. As noted in the Senate report on the legislation, the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from any aspect of the reforms in the Act is unacceptable.

To be successful, a policy of inclusion will have to address the full range of individual learning needs, performance levels, and functional differences that exist among students with disabilities—without compromising high expectations. In the area of assessment, for example, some students with visual or hearing impairments, communicative disorders, or motor dysfunctions may find certain test items inaccessible, or may have limited ability to respond to test materials. To measure the learning of these children could require adaptations in test format, presentation, or responses. Examples include taking tests in Braille, by audiocassette, or by computer; taking tests in smaller groups or with extended time; or answering through oral response or sign language.

Perhaps the most critical questions turn on the inclusion of children with disabilities in *Goals 2000* instructional reforms: it makes little sense to focus on higher standards and better assessment for students with disabilities—or for any other students—without also making significant instructional improvements to help them achieve at higher levels. Decisions about

(b) Engage individuals and/or organizations representing persons with various types and severity of disabilities, and solicit their information and advice, through hearings and/or workshop;

(c) Prepare an interim report, as specified in the legislation;

(d) Articulate, in the final report, a coherent strategy to include children with disabilities in *Goals 2000* instructional and assessment reforms.

Committee Composition

The Committee will have up to 15 members, with expertise in at least the following areas: instruction and curriculum for disabled students; assessment and measurement of disabled students; legal issues; instructional and measurement applications of advanced computer technologies; general issues in standards-based education.

Work Plan

In conducting this study, the committee will draw upon information and expertise from earlier NRC studies and ongoing work of the Board on Testing and Assessment. Therefore, meetings of the committee will, to the extent possible, be scheduled to enable presentations and discussions with the Board. The committee will meet 7 times. A one-day workshop is planned to bring together experts on educational technology and the learning-disabled. In addition, a two-day conference is planned, as well as other efforts to gather written and/or oral testimony from representatives of various stakeholder communities.

RELATION TO OTHER NRC ACTIVITIES

The Coordinating Council for Education has provided comment and suggestions on this proposal. In addition, this project will benefit from and share information with the Board's anticipated study committee on Performance Standards for School and Work.

PRODUCT AND DISSEMINATION PLAN

The interim report will be delivered 12 months after the study commences, and the final report will be delivered 12 months later. Both reports will undergo normal NRC report review procedures, and will be printed by National Academy Press in quantities sufficient to fulfill sponsor contract requirements, distribution to committee members in accordance with NRC policy, and sale to the general public.

**APPENDIX D: Material From
Jim Button**

DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR GOALS 2000 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

October 21, 1994

Introduction

Education reform efforts over the last 25 years have achieved some good results, but have often been limited to individual schools or a single part of the system. These efforts have demonstrated that meaningful improvements in student learning will require high expectations for all children; active participation by parents, educators and communities; safe learning environments; meaningful teacher education and professional development; the effective use of technology in teaching and learning; and flexibility for innovation linked to accountability for results.

If lasting improvement in student performance is to occur, States and communities must fundamentally change their system of education through comprehensive, coherent and coordinated reform. Communities must focus on the results of their education system -- what students should know and be able to do -- and hold the system accountable for those results. At the heart of systemic reform is the understanding that all students can learn and achieve to high standards. Therefore, Goals 2000 is predicated on this principle -- all elements of the education system should support the achievement high standards for all children.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act provides States and communities with an opportunity to broaden their reform efforts by developing a coherent, flexible, grassroots-based education system enabling all children to achieve challenging academic standards. Many States are currently using Goals 2000 funds to develop a comprehensive plan based upon its unique vision of reform, build widespread support for education reform, and provide subgrants to local educational agencies so that they may build capacity to implement local reforms consistent with the State's vision. The Act also makes funds available for the development of a plan for the use of technology that is to be integrated into the State improvement plan. In addition, Goals 2000 provides the flexibility to use the means best suited to the State to achieve its goals, and makes waivers available for certain statutory and regulatory provisions that impede reform. Once the State improvement plan is approved, the State will receive further funding to implement its plan and continue awarding subgrants.

This guidance is intended to assist States in the formation of their plans and set out the basis upon which peer reviewers and the Secretary will evaluate those plans. A plan should demonstrate a clear understanding of the context in which it will be implemented, present a comprehensive vision of the education system the State believes is necessary to help all children learn to high standards, and describe a coherent, step-by-step set of strategies for accomplishing that vision. The guidance is organized around three criteria:

- 1) The plan reflects widespread commitment within the State.
- 2) The plan allows local schools, local educational agencies and communities the flexibility to implement local improvement plans in a manner which reflects local needs and requirements in order to promote a bottom-up system of school reform.
- 3) The plan holds reasonable promise of helping all students achieve at the high levels called for in the Act.

Each of the criteria contains a number of elements that must be addressed in the plan. Each element, in turn, contains a question or series of questions that must be effectively answered for the plan to be approved. However, a strong State improvement plan will not answer these questions independently of one another; instead, the objective is an integrated, systemic plan for continuous improvement. Evidence of an effective response to many of these questions will likely appear in more than one location within the plan.

The questions are followed by examples of evidence that serve as illustrations of possible ways in that the plan might satisfy the requirements of the Act. Plans are not limited to this evidence, nor should the lists be construed as exhaustive. A plan should first and foremost adopt strategies that best fit the unique circumstances of their State.

The legislation in Section 306(n) requires a State improvement plan to meet the three criteria listed above -- widespread commitment, flexibility and reasonable promise of helping all children -- as well as the specific requirements of Section 306 of the Act. To emphasize the need for an integrated plan, this guidance has incorporated the specific Section 306 requirements into the other three criteria. A plan that adequately addresses each element in this guidance will have met the State plan requirements of Section 306.

Review Process

Once a State has submitted its plan for approval, a peer review panel will be selected from a diverse, broad-based pool of State and local policymakers, classroom teachers, educators, related services personnel, experts on educational innovation, parents, advocates and other appropriate individuals, as provided for under Section 306(n). Peer reviewers will meet and discuss the plan, and some reviewers will then make a site visit to the State. Following the site visit, the panel will make a recommendation to the Secretary as to whether the plan should be approved. The final decision rests with the Secretary.

Integration of Technology

The Goals 2000 Act places a strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning through the use of educational technology. As such, strategies for the use of technology should be infused throughout any effective State improvement plan. Peer reviewers will provide feedback on the technology aspect of the State's plan using the requirements of Section 317 of the Act, and discussed in an appendix to this guidance. Although Section 317 of the Act requires a State to integrate technology into its State improvement plan, approval of the State improvement plan is not contingent on approval of the technology components of the plan. The Secretary will not approve a plan for the use of technology unless a State requests such approval in order to use funds received under Section 317 for implementation purposes.

Waivers

Section 311 of the Act gives the Secretary the authority to grant waivers from certain statutory and regulatory provisions of selected federal education programs if he determines, among other things, that the federal requirement impedes the ability of a State, local educational agency, or school, to carry out State or local school improvement plans. Requests for waivers may be included as part of the State's plan submission or at a later date. If a State includes a waiver request with its State improvement plan, it will be considered concurrently with the plan, but the two processes are separate; approval of a plan does not obligate the Secretary to grant a waiver included in that plan. Waivers are discussed in greater detail in an appendix to this guidance.

Goals 2000 Act: Selected Provisions

Attached to this guidance is Title III of the Goals 2000 Act.

DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR GOALS 2000 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

Criterion 1: The plan reflects widespread commitment within the State

The intent of this criterion is that the development and implementation process lead to the establishment of a statewide, broad-based, enduring coalition to support education reform. In determining whether a plan reflects widespread commitment, reviewers will examine how the plan was developed and the level of support it has in the State. In order to meet this criteria, there must be:

- **Broad-Based Community and Parental Involvement in the Development and Implementation of the Plan**

Does the panel membership include the broad-based representation required by Section 306(b)(1) of the Act?

To the extent feasible, is the panel membership geographically representative of the State and does it reflect the diversity of the population with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, and disability characteristics? (Section 306(b)(3)(A))

Does the panel contain the required number of members with expertise or background in the educational needs or assessments of children from low-income families, children with minority backgrounds, children with limited-English proficiency, and children with disabilities? (Section 306(b)(3)(B))

In developing the State improvement plan, did the panel conduct a statewide, grassroots outreach process that included public hearings and involved the diverse and representative groups referenced in Section 306(b)(5)?

Evidence of outreach might include: the use of approaches such as public hearings and discussions among key stakeholders in the development and implementation of the plan; opinion polls or broad-based focus groups; widespread dissemination of information; widespread opportunities for public comment on drafts of the plan; media campaigns; regular reporting on educational progress; the use of technology, such as electronic mail and bulletin board systems, to communicate directly with education policy makers; etc.

Is the panel engaging these diverse and representative groups in a continuing dialogue regarding the need for and nature of standards for all students and local and State responsibilities for helping all students achieve these standards? (306(b)(5))

Are there strategies to involve parents and other community representatives in development and implementation of the plan? (Section 306(f))

Evidence of parental and community involvement strategies might include: procedures to inform parents and communities about the development of State and local plans and the opportunities for participation in that process, with specific strategies to facilitate input from parents of economically disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, and children with limited-English proficiency; strategies to foster coordination between education agencies and other institutions and organizations responsible for the welfare of children; facilitating access for all children to services such as child care, health care, and nutrition; strategies to coordinate State and local services; strategies to cultivate partnerships to help implement the plan and support long-term reform; provisions to make parents aware of the development of and use for State content and performance standards; etc.

- **Broad-Based and Enduring Support for the Proposed Plan**

Has the State shown that there is broad-based support for the proposed plan, including support from State and local governments (Section 302(a), Section 306(b)(5), Section 306(n)(2))

Evidence of support might include: results of public opinion polls; organizational endorsements; local level reforms consistent with the plan; the enactment of necessary legislation, budget requests or appropriations; the establishment of partnerships for implementing the plan; methods to directly support a continuing public dialogue on plan implementation, such as town meetings and forums, including satellite town meetings; etc.

Criterion 2: The plan allows local schools, local educational agencies and communities the flexibility to implement local improvement plans in a manner that reflects local needs and requirements in order to promote a "bottom-up" system of school reform.

The intent of this criterion is for the State improvement plan to guide local education improvement efforts, while providing enough flexibility and incentives to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools so that they may determine and implement the best and most innovative means to improve the academic achievement of all students. Thus each plan must provide:

- **Strategies for Building Local Capacity for Innovation:**

What are the State's strategies for coordinating and facilitating the building of local capacity for comprehensive, bottom-up reform in communities, local education agencies and schools? (Section 306(h))

Evidence of local capacity strategies might include: criteria and priorities for the required LEA subgrants; efforts to include local educators in the development of State content, performance, and opportunity-to-learn standards; telecommunications networks throughout the State to promote information sharing and collaboration; strategies to target State discretionary resources to support local reform efforts; pre-service and professional development programs to train teachers in new skills, including the use of technology, necessary to implement reforms; strategies to provide sufficient time for planning and implementing local improvements; encouragement and incentives to involve stakeholders in local innovation and change; connecting high standards and the use of technology to teacher certification and recertification standards; dissemination of exemplary programs and practices; methods for identifying and sharing success stories; promotions and awards for schools and teachers which demonstrate high performance; a regular means to report on educational progress at the local level; provisions for charter and magnet schools and public school choice; etc.

- **Flexibility to Develop and Implement Unique Local Improvement Plans**

Does the plan lend itself to effective adaptation to the needs and circumstances of LEAs and schools? (Sections 306(h), 306(n)(2)(D))

Evidence of local flexibility might include provisions in the plan for: waivers of State rules and regulations that impede local school reform efforts; LEAs to define their own goals and standards that are as high or higher than the State goals and standards; regular opportunities, including electronic mail and bulletin board systems, for local educators to discuss and offer feedback on the State improvement plan; mechanisms for local education agencies and schools to purchase instructional materials, training, and technology directly; etc.

Criterion 3: The plan holds reasonable promise of helping all students achieve at the high levels called for in the Act.

The intent of this criterion is that the State improvement plan realistically and thoughtfully describe comprehensive strategies for enabling **all** children to reach **challenging academic standards**. Each plan must reflect a clear understanding of the State's current education system; a compelling vision of what that system should look like in the future in order for all children to attain high standards; and a coherent, step-by-step set of strategies for realizing that vision. While the individual requirements of the Act must be satisfied, with components reasonably grounded in research, experience, or other evidence of best practices, the elements must be coherently integrated into the overall plan. To meet this criterion, a plan must include the following:

- **Goals and Objectives**

What is the State's vision of the education system necessary to help all children reach high standards and how does that vision reflect its evaluation of the current education system? (Section 302(a), Section 306(k))

Evidence of goals and objectives might include: a mission statement and description of the shared goals, values, and guiding principles of the State; an assessment of the current strengths and weaknesses of the educational system; descriptions of the historical context influencing the design of the plan; an analysis of the discrepancies between the current state and the future goals that the State wishes to reach; a description of how the major strategies will be integrated to improve student learning; etc.

- **Coherent and Coordinated Strategies:**

Has the State shown that the strategies contained in the plan are integrated in a coherent fashion to help all children learn to high standards? (Section 302(a))

Evidence of coherent and coordinated strategies might include: processes to improve the coordination of available local, State, and Federal resources to support improved student learning; the development of mechanisms for LEAs to submit consolidated local plans or applications to the State; the submission of consolidated State plans and applications to the U.S. Department of Education, as authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; increasing the access of all students and families to various community services in a school setting or at a nearby site; strategies to assist parents in helping their children work towards achieving high standards, with specific strategies aimed at helping the parents of children who are economically disadvantaged, of limited-English proficiency, or who have disabilities; accountability mechanisms tied to student achievement; strategies to broadly include the community in decisionmaking and place decisionmaking closest to learners; strategies to assist parents to learn about the use of technology in their children's education; etc.

Does the plan coordinate vocational education , federally supported under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, with wider State reform efforts? (Section 306(l))

Does the Goals 2000 State plan describe how the State's School-to-Work Opportunities system will be incorporated into its reform efforts? Does the State plan include a description of how secondary schools will be modified in order to provide career guidance, the integration of academic and vocational education, and work-based learning? (Section 306(j))

Evidence of coordination with school-to-work systems and vocational education programs might include: a description of the State's strategies to hold students in school-to-work and vocational programs to the same high academic standards as other students; professional development activities supporting the integration of the State's content and performance standards with vocational and school-to-work training and curriculum; collaboration with other agencies and organizations; the development of business-education-labor partnerships to expose students to integrated and high quality academics and work experiences; joint planning and development at the State level for the integration of academic and vocational education through a coherent sequence of courses; coordination of professional development activities to include academic and vocational teachers; providing students with a strong understanding of and experience in all aspects of a the industry they are preparing to enter; equipment and classroom modifications; guidance, counseling, and career development activities and services which prepare students for college and careers in high-skill, high-wage settings; etc.

• **Teaching, Learning, Standards and Assessments**

At the core of systemic reform are challenging academic standards. These standards must be reinforced by all aspects of the education process. Peer reviewers will ask the following fundamental questions in reviewing this aspect of the improvement plan?

Does the plan provide a process for developing or adopting State content and student performance standards for all students?

- Will the standards developed through this process be challenging academically?
- Will these standards be coordinated with those developed under section 115 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act?

Does the plan provide a process for developing and implementing valid, nondiscriminatory, and reliable State assessments that:

- are aligned with the State's content standards;
- involve multiple measures of student performance;

- provide for the participation in assessments of all students with diverse learning needs, with the adaptations and accommodations necessary to permit such participation;
- are consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical standards for such assessments;
- are capable of providing coherent information about student attainments relative to the State content standards;
- support effective curriculum and instruction; and
- include a process for providing for monitoring the implementation of such assessments and the impact of them on improved instruction for all students?

Does the plan incorporate a mechanism for **aligning** State or local curricula, instructional materials, and State assessments with the State content and student performance standards?

Does the plan provide a process for **familiarizing teachers** with the State content and student performance standards and developing the capability of teachers to provide high quality instruction within the State content areas?

Evidence for addressing this component of the State plan might include: a process to involve the educational community in the selection of subjects and identification of content to be included in the standards; a process of review to determine if recommended standards are high; a process to inform parents and students on a regular basis about student progress toward the standards; strategies to help LEAs develop curricula and instructional materials, including gender equitable and multicultural materials, and technology to support the achievement of State performance standards by all students; a means for teachers to communicate with one another about the achievement of high standards; a process for providing appropriate and effective professional development, including the use of technology, distance learning, and gender-equitable methods, necessary for teachers, schools administrators, and others to help all children reach challenging standards; licensing and certification requirements aligned with standards; a process for improving teacher and administrator preparation, licensure, and inservice programs, including the use of technology so all educators have the expertise to help students reach State content and student performance standards; etc.

- **High Standards for All Students**

Does the plan provide that the same challenging standards will be applied to all students -- including economically disadvantaged students; students with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or other special needs; and gifted and talented students? (Section 306(c))

Does the plan demonstrate that all students, including students with diverse learning needs, will be included in assessments, and that appropriate accommodations and adaptations necessary to permit their participation will be made? (Section 306(c))

Evidence of high standards for all students might include: a clear statement of philosophy regarding the development of standards that are to apply to all children, a process for developing standards that includes a diverse array of individuals representing all at-risk groups; a process for developing standards that explicitly includes methods to ensure that all students are included in the standards; citations of programs targeted to students who need supplemental assistance in reaching the standards; early and frequent pilot tests within the development process to ensure that the standards the State develops are standards for all students; etc.

- **Opportunity to Learn Standards or Strategies**

Does the State plan establish standards or strategies for providing all students - including economically disadvantaged students; students with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or other special needs; and gifted and talented students -- the opportunity to learn to challenging academic standards, based on those factors as the State deems appropriate to ensure that all students receive a fair opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills as described in State content and student performance standards? (Section 306(d))

Has the State shown how these standards or strategies would effectively provide all students access to the knowledge and skills necessary to reach the State standards? (Section 306(d))

Evidence of opportunity-to-learn standards or strategies might include strategies: to promote safe and secure schools; to increase access to high quality curricula, instructional materials (including gender equitable and multicultural), and technologies for all children; to provide additional instructional time and resources for students with special needs; to provide teachers, principals, and other school staff with easy and ongoing access to professional development activities so that they have the capacity to teach to high standards; to revise teacher and administrator preservice and licensure requirements to reflect the State content and student performance standards; to provide schools with adequate libraries and laboratories for teaching and learning; to identify and assist schools where all children are not meeting high academic standards; and to improve the State's system of teacher and school administrator preparation and licensure.

NOTE: The Goals 2000 Act provides flexibility for States and localities to exercise their own discretion regarding how and whether to implement opportunity to learn standards or strategies. (Section 306(d)(2))

- **Making Improvements Systemwide**

Does the plan articulate strategies to assist LEAs and schools throughout the State in helping all students reach the challenging State standards? (Section 306(g))

Evidence of making the improvements systemwide might include: procedures to disseminate the State's vision for education reform throughout the State; mechanisms to document student progress and continually improve the system; strategies to assess needs and provide technical assistance to schools; provisions to intervene in low-achieving schools; strategies to maintain commitment to improving the education system; strategies to document and disseminate exemplary programs statewide; communication systems to support the sharing of best practices and lessons learned among educators and policymakers; strategies to increase the availability of curricular materials, learning technologies (including distance learning), and professional development; partnerships with Indian tribes and Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools, where applicable; etc.

- **Dropout Strategies**

Does the plan include strategies to enable LEAs and schools to meet the needs of school-aged children who have dropped out of school and to bring them back into the educational system? (Section 306(i))

Does the plan provide strategies to help children who have dropped out of school meet State content and performance standards? (Section 306(i))

Evidence of dropout strategies might include: effective means of identifying children who have dropped out of school; communication strategies for informing these children about educational supports or alternative educational settings; strategies to collaborate with other agencies to help children who have dropped out of school receive the supports they need to complete their education; strategies to include dropouts in the State's school-to-work system; linkages to the State's adult education system; development of alternative schools or charter schools; strategies to help parents prevent children from dropping out of school; etc.

- **Governance, Accountability and Management**

What are the State's strategies for improving governance, accountability, and management of the State's education system to help all students perform at high levels? (Section 306(e))

Evidence of governance, accountability, and management strategies might include: procedures to assist schools that are not meeting the State content standards; strategies to move decision-making closest to the learners, such as site-based management, charter schools, and public school choice; the articulation of State goals and promotion of flexibility at the local level to reach those goals; provisions for directing technical assistance to schools in need; incentives for schools to help their students achieve the State standards; linkages between teacher education and certification and State content and performance standards; use of technology for comparative data collection and management; etc.

- **Effective Benchmarks and Timelines:**

Does the plan include benchmarks of improved student performance and progress in plan implementation? (Section 306(k))

Does the plan contain timelines against which progress of the State in carrying out its plan, including the elements described in subsections (c) through (j), can be measured? (Section 306(k))

Evidence might include timelines and benchmarks relating to the development of: content and student performance standards that are challenging; a system for reviewing student progress, including breakdowns for special student populations; levels of expected student performance at specified intervals; timeframes and goals for assessments tied to standards; curriculum frameworks based on challenging standards; instructional strategies consistent with curriculum frameworks and challenging standards; innovative methods to ensure an opportunity to learn for all students; increased numbers of students enrolling in challenging coursework; professional development programs and accreditation certificates tied to challenging standards; financial and legislative commitments to achieving standards; integration of programs and resources to support State and local reform efforts; new State and local initiatives to support the State's comprehensive reform plan; a means of providing technical assistance to districts and schools to help them implement reforms; targets for higher education community involvement in reform efforts; and parental and community participation in reform activities.

- **Program Improvement and Regular Review**

How will the State monitor progress toward implementing the State and local improvement plans? (Section 306(m))

What procedures will the State use, consistent with State law, to assist schools that are not meeting the State content standards voluntarily adopted by the State within established timelines? (Section 306(m))

What process will the State use for periodically reviewing and updating any State content standards, State student performance standards, State opportunity to learn standards or strategies, and State assessments? (Section 306(0))

Evidence of program improvement and review might include: procedures to use indicators and timelines to measure the progress of local reform efforts; methods for identifying schools not meeting the standards; provisions for technical assistance; mechanisms for input and feedback from educators; inclusion of regular reviews in the timelines; strategies to assess the reliability and validity of assessments; the use of technology for data collection and reporting purposes; etc.

APPENDIX A

THE STATEWIDE SYSTEMIC PLAN FOR TECHNOLOGY

Section 317 of the Act assists States in developing a statewide systemic plan for improving learning and teaching through the use of technology. Technology plans shall have as their objectives:

the promotion of higher student achievement through the use of technology in education;

the participation of all schools and districts, especially those with a high percentage of disadvantaged students;

the development and implementation of a cost-effective, high-speed, statewide, interoperable, wide-area-communication educational technology support system for elementary and secondary schools, particularly those in rural areas; and

the promotion of shared usage of equipment, facilities, and other technology resources by adult learners during after-school hours.

Educational technology should support the achievement of high standards by all students; therefore, the technology plan must be developed as an integral part of the State improvement plan described in section 306. Technology plans may be incorporated into the State improvement plan or be presented as an independent document. However, approval of a State improvement plan is not contingent on the approval of the technology plan.

Should a state wish to use any of the funds it received under section 317 to implement its technology plan, it must first have its plan approved by the Secretary. Peer reviewers will consider a State's technology plan during the evaluation of the State's improvement plan, but will make recommendations to the Secretary on the technology plan only if the State requests formal approval.

Peer reviewers will consider the following in evaluating a technology plan:

- **Plan Development**

Does the composition of the task force that developed the technology plan satisfy the requirements of 317(d)(1)(A)?

Was the plan developed in collaboration with the persons and entities required in 317(d)(2)?

Was the plan developed through a process of statewide grassroots outreach to local educational agencies and schools in the State? (317(d)(2))

How is the technology plan integrated into the State improvement plan described in section 306? (317(d)(1)(B))

Does the technology plan demonstrate strategies to improve student learning in all schools? (317(a))

- **Coordination and Collaboration**

How will the State educational agency and local educational agencies coordinate and cooperate with business and industry, and with public and private telecommunications entities? (317(d)(10))

How will the State educational agency facilitate collaboration between State literacy resource centers, local educational agencies, and adult and family literacy providers, to ensure that technology can be used by adult and family literacy providers during and after school hours? (317(d)(15))

- **Application of Advanced Technologies**

Does the technology plan describe how the application of advanced technologies in the schools will enhance student learning and provide greater access to individualized instruction? (317(d)(4))

- **Opportunity to Learn**

Does the technology plan promote the opportunity to learn standards and strategies described in section 306(d), and help make progress toward the achievement of the National Education Goals? (317(d)(4))

How will the State educational agency apply the uses of technology to meet the needs of children from low-income families? (317(d)(13))

- **Requirements for Introducing Technology into the Classroom**

How does the technology plan identify and describe the requirements for introducing state-of-the-art technologies into the classroom and school library in order to enhance educational curricula? (317(d)(3))

Do these requirements include the installation and ongoing maintenance of basic connections, hardware and necessary support materials? (317(d)(3))

- **Interoperability and Open System Design**

How will the State educational agency promote the purchase of equipment by local educational agencies that, when placed in schools, will meet the highest possible level of interoperability and open system design? (317(d)(11))

How will the State educational agency consider using existing telecommunications infrastructure and technology resources? (317(d)(12))

- **Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance**

How will the ongoing training of educational personnel be provided? (317(d)(5))

Does the technology plan describe the resources necessary, and procedures, for providing ongoing technical assistance to carry out such plan? (317(d)(6))

Does the plan provide for the dissemination on a statewide basis of exemplary programs and practices relating to the use of technology in education? (317(d)(7))

- **Funding Estimate and Schedule**

Does the technology plan establish a funding estimate (including a statement of likely funding sources) and a schedule for the development and implementation of such plan? (317(d)(8))

- **Impact on Student and School Achievement**

How will the State educational agency assess the impact of implementing the technology plan on student achievement and aggregate achievement for schools? (317(d)(9))

- **Review and Periodic Update**

What is the process through which the technology plan will be reviewed and updated periodically? (317(d)(14))

APPENDIX B

WAIVERS

The Goals 2000 Act authorizes the Secretary to waive certain Federal statutory or regulatory requirements that impede the ability of the State, or of a local educational agency (LEA) or school within the State, from carrying out an approved State improvement plan or local improvement plans. In the process of developing its comprehensive improvement plan, a State may determine that waivers may be necessary to implement its plan. Thus, waiver requests may be included as part of a plan's integrated set of strategies for systemic reform, or submitted at a later date during the plan implementation phase.

Section 311(a) through (c) of the Act authorizes the Secretary to waive requirements applicable to the following programs:

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA);
Part A of title II of the ESEA;
Part A of title V of the ESEA;
Title VIII of the ESEA of 1984;
Part B of title IX of the ESEA; and
The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act.

The Act expressly states that there may not be waivers of requirements relating to maintenance of effort, comparability of services, equitable participation of students and professional staff in private schools, parental participation and involvement, and the distribution of funds to States or LEAs. In addition, civil rights requirements may not be waived.

When submitting a waiver request, either as part of the State plan or at a later date, the State educational agency (SEA) must:

- o identify the requirements that are requested to be waived and the goals that the SEA, LEA, or school intends to achieve;
- o describe the action that the SEA has undertaken to remove State statutory or regulatory barriers identified in any application of LEAs for waivers;
- o describe the goals of the waiver and its expected programmatic results;
- o describe the numbers and types of students to be impacted by the waiver;
- o describe a timetable for implementing the waiver; and
- o describe the process the SEA will use to monitor, on a biannual basis, the progress in implementing the waiver.

The Secretary may grant a waiver request only after determining that:

- o the requirements sought to be waived impede the ability of the State, LEA, or school to carry out the State or local improvement plan;
- o the State has waived, or agrees to waive, similar requirements of State law;
- o in the case of a statewide waiver, the State has provided notice and an opportunity to comment to LEAs and parent organizations, and has forwarded the comments of LEAs to the Secretary;
- o in the case of an LEA waiver, the LEA has provided parents, community groups, and advocacy or civil rights groups with the opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver; and
- o the underlying purposes of the requirement for which a waiver is sought would continue to be met.

SEA waiver requests should be submitted directly to the Secretary. Waiver requests by an LEA or school must be submitted to the SEA. The SEA will then submit LEA and school waiver applications that it approves to the Secretary for his review.

If a waiver request is submitted as part of the State plan submission, review of the plan and the waiver request will take place concurrently. However, these are two different review processes. Even if the Secretary approves a State plan that incorporates a waiver proposal, he will separately determine whether the waiver should be granted. Accordingly, peer reviewers will be asked to evaluate only the educational merits of State plans concerning waivers; they will not be charged with determining the appropriateness of the waiver requests.

Each waiver may be granted for a period of not more than four years. The Secretary may extend the waiver period if the waiver is shown to be effective in enabling the relevant entities to carry out reform plans. On the other hand, a waiver may be terminated if the performance of the affected parties has been inadequate to justify continuation of the waiver.

Section 306(e) of the Act establishes a separate waiver demonstration program -- the Education Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Program -- under which the Secretary may delegate to six SEAs the authority to waive certain Federal statutory or regulatory requirements for the SEA, or for any LEA or school within the State. The Department is preparing for public comment a notice of proposed application requirements and selection criteria for this program. It is anticipated that the notice will be published in the Federal Register in December 1994.